

California Polytechnic State University

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### **International Science Award Named in Honor of Cal Poly Professor**

SAN LUIS OBISPO – An international science society has created an award recognizing scientific efforts in the study of cells and has named it after a Cal Poly professor.

Professor Paul K. Nakane of Cal Poly's [Environmental Biotechnology Institute](#) will be the first recipient of the award named in his honor by the International Federation of Societies for Histochemistry and Cytochemistry.

Histochemistry and cytochemistry are branches of science that focus on the study of the chemical composition and activities of tissues and cells.

The group presented the award to Nakane at its international congress in San Diego July 24. Along with a plaque and a certificate, the award includes an expenses-paid trip to the society's international congress, held every four years. The award will go to professionals who show outstanding scientific contributions and international leadership in advancing the disciplines of histochemistry and cytochemistry.

The international group named the award in Nakane's honor in recognition of his scientific accomplishments and leadership in scientific societies in the United States and Japan, as well as in the International Federation of Societies for Histochemistry and Cytochemistry, according to IFSHC President Ron Van Noorden.

"The prize recognizes the role you have played as a scientist and leader, and we can think of no person more deserving of the award than yourself," Van Noorden told Nakane in announcing the award and its first recipient.

Nakane, who has been with Cal Poly since 2003, said the award is a great honor. "I've received many awards before, but to receive an award named after me is different," he said. "To know that the Paul Nakane prize

will be given to someone long after I am gone is a strange feeling.”

Nakane serves as a consultant to Cal Poly EBI Director and Professor Emeritus Raul Cano, in addition to doing research projects at the institute. This fall, he will begin a research project seeking to develop a clinical medical test to identify specific antibiotics effective against infectious bacteria and fungi within two hours after receiving clinical specimens from infected patients.

If doctors are able to get test results more quickly and identify the specific fungi and bacteria causing illness in patients, they will be better able to prescribe targeted antibiotics rather than broad-spectrum antibiotics, Nakane said.

Right now, when physicians wait for the results of throat cultures and other bacterial tests, “The time required to obtain the information is too long, and so patients are treated with broad-spectrum antibiotics prior to test results,” explained Nakane, who also holds a doctorate in medicine. That practice is resulting in the emergence of drug-resistant strains of bacteria and fungi – something more rapid test results could combat.

He said he became interested in cells and mutation during science classes on genetics when he was a high school student in his native Japan.

Before coming to Cal Poly, Nakane served as a professor of pathology at the University of Colorado School of Medicine from 1976-1982, the director of the Medical Research Institute at Tokai University in Japan from 1982 to 1987, and from 1987 to 2003 was chair of the anatomy department at Nagasaki University School of Medicine.

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